

Communications Plan 2016/17 (version 1)

Communications Working Group - LGPC Secretariat

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1. Communications Working Group

a) Background

The Communications Working Group (CWG), a meeting of communication professionals from Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds in England and Wales is a collaborative forum, who meet on a quarterly basis to develop items of communication for scheme members in the LGPS. The group was created and is run by the Local Government Pensions Committee Secretariat (LGPC) (as part of the Local Government Association).

The CWG provides the opportunity for LGPS funds to share knowledge and experience in the field of communications and for this information to then assist the LGPC secretariat in the development and provision of centrally devised communications resources. The group has been in existence for a number of years and is considered a strong example of collaboration in action across the LGPS.

The CWG priorities include the identification of best practice within pension communications generally and the LGPS specifically, exploring the areas where centrally produced communications would save individual LGPS funds financial resources and staff time.

Across the LGPS, all funds have common, mutual objectives in terms of the message they need to communicate to scheme members. The CWG provides for the division of labour and sharing of knowledge, which helps to deliver an improved product and a consistency of message for all funds across the LGPS. This is even more evident in the work needed to implement large communication projects such as

LGPS 2008 and 2014 reforms and in communicating how changes to the tax controls on pensions and the ending of contracting out affects LGPS members.

The documents produced by the LGPC in conjunction with the CWG for LGPS can be found at:

- www.lgpsmember.org

Document, content and information prepared by the LGPC secretariat in conjunction with the CWG can be found on the communications resource section of the lgpsreg.org website available from:

- <http://www.lgpsregs.org/index.php/resources/comms-resources>

Set out below are the terms of reference for the CWG including current membership of the group, role of the rotating chair, links outside the group, frequency of meetings and the role of task driven sub-groups.

b) Membership of the Communications Working Group

The CWG consists of officers from LGPS funds who in the main are tasked with leading on the area of communication for their fund. These officers volunteer their time to attend quarterly meetings held in London. The LGPC are the secretariat for, and facilitate these meetings in their offices to reflect that this is the most convenient location for the group. In addition work will be carried out via email amongst the CWG, where possible.

List of Members

Name	LGPS Pension Fund
Andy Brooks	Gwent (Torfaen) Pension Fund
Ben Altoft	Avon Pension Fund
Carol Haywood	Leicestershire Pension Fund
Cheryl Platts	Buckinghamshire Pension Fund
Cory Blose	LGSS Pensions Service (Northamptonshire)
David Williams	Environment Agency Pension Fund
Guy Hayton	Merseyside Pension Fund
Heather Chambers (chair)	Tyne and Wear Pension Fund
Jenny Wylie	Oxfordshire Pension Fund
Kevin Thompson	West Midlands Pension Fund
Mandy Judd	Hampshire Pension Fund
Martin Griffiths	Staffordshire Pension Fund
Mathew James (vice chair)	Dyfed Pension Fund
Neil Lewins	London Pension Fund Authority
Rebecca Purfit	Shropshire Pension Fund
Steve Makin	Avon Pension Fund
Zoe Stannard	Wiltshire Pension Fund
Secretariat	
Lorraine Bennett	LGPC

c) Terms of Reference

Membership: Individuals can put themselves forward for membership of the group to the LGPC secretariat for consideration. To ensure effective debate and discussion can occur, the optimum number which the group aims to retain is 20 members. Once at capacity the group will retain requests for membership from other interested parties and where members leave or are unable to attend meetings then consideration will be made by the secretariat to incorporate these requests.

Frequency of meetings: Quarterly meetings held in London with dates agreed by consensus with the CWG. Actions and agreements from CWG meetings are made available from <http://www.lgpsregs.org/index.php/resources/comms-resources>.

Chair: The secretariat will seek nominations from CWG members for the role of chair on a biennial basis. The chair will preside over each of the quarterly meetings. Where more than one nomination is received the group will undertake a ballot (managed by the secretariat) to determine the chair for that year. The chair shall take over their role every two years in April in line with that year's new annual communications plan. A chair may retain the role of chair for subsequent years up to a maximum number of years as agreed by the group and the LGPC secretariat.

Vice-chair: The secretariat will seek nominations from CWG members for the role of vice-chair on a biennial basis. The vice-chair will preside over quarterly meetings where the chair is unable to attend. Where more than one nomination is received the group will undertake a ballot (managed by the secretariat) to determine the vice-chair for that year. The vice chair shall take over their role every two years in April in line with that year's new annual communications plan. A vice-chair may retain the role of chair for subsequent years up to a maximum number of years as agreed by the group and the LGPC secretariat.

Secretariat: The secretariat will devise the agenda and prepare papers for meetings of the CWG. They will liaise with the group when formulating agendas and look to issue agendas 5 working days before any meeting. The minutes of meetings (taken by the secretariat) will focus on the actions and agreements and be made available to CWG members for review 5 working days after any meeting. The secretariat will also be responsible for the creation of an annual communications plan and will make any final decision about the work that is contained in that plan following consultation with CWG members and in line with the work plan of the LGPC secretariat.

Link to other structures: Working and liaising with groups such as the Scheme Advisory Board, regional communications groups, Pensions Officers Groups, Technical Group etc. In addition the CWG will seek to develop a closer relationship with other public service pension schemes identifying lessons to be learned and best practice across the sector.

Sub-groups: Where specific task-based projects are required CWG members to break into sub-groups to deliver that project.

2. Communications Plan

Following on from the success of the LGPS 2014 communication plan a decision was taken in 2014/15 to develop an annual plan for the CWG to detail the work that the group would be focusing on in that year. This is also to ensure that all Pension Funds and employers are aware of the items of communication the group is aiming to produce.

This plan sets out the objectives for the year 2016/17 alongside a timeframe for the development of communication items. The secretariat will be responsible for updating the plan in line with developments over the year. The items in this plan are over and above the regular items of communication prepared by the LGPC (including, for example the regular suite of member guides).

Previous communication plans can be viewed here – [2014/15 plan](#) and [2015/16 plan](#).

3. Work plan 2016/17

It was agreed at the meeting on 10th February 2016 for the plan to contain standing agenda items that would be under review each year alongside special items that come about as a result of pension reforms, such as freedom and choice and the ending of contracting out.

The standing agenda items in addition to the 2016/17 specific items are set out in the table below. All items of the work plan are to be carried out by the LGPC in conjunction with CWG members. Any documentation produced will be available from www.lgpsregs.org

Core topic	Details	Timeframe (aim for delivery)
Standing agenda items		
Annual Benefit Statements	- Following the issuing of ABS statements by 31 August each year, the group will undertake a review of the experience of LGPS Funds each autumn and identify lessons to be learnt from the exercise as well as improvements which can be made to the ABS template.	- Autumn each year
Pensions Taxation	- Review of the current member communication on pension taxation	- August 2016
	- Update existing communication with changes to interim	- August 2016

	procedure for Fixed and Individual Protection 2016	
Member Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of feedback from online survey each quarter - Review of the usage statistics each quarter - CWG to review the responses to the feedback and agree any amendments to the site, as appropriate - Updates to website due to regulation/overriding regulation changes - Improvements to the site including making the site accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of technology or ability. This will include work to introduce different text size and colour scheme options. - Closure of www.lgps2014.org and setting www.lgps.org.uk as a forwarding page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each quarter - Each quarter - As appropriate - March 2017 - December 2016
Agenda items specific to 2016/17		
Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) Member Leaflet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anticipated that DCLG will provide amendments to AVC provision in light of Freedom and Choice legislation introduced 6 April 2015 - In line with those changes (draft legislation anticipated before the summer recess 2016) the CWG want to focus on member information on AVCs to ensure the position is clearly documented - Leaflet to be designed by CWG once amended position clarified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - November 2015 (subject to amendment regulations being passed)
Ending of Contracting-out/New State Pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop member information on the impact on indexation of GMPs post ending of contracting out - Documentation to be designed by CWG once the longer term position has been clarified (for those members who attain SPA after 5 December 2018 the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By January 2017 (subject to position being clarified)

	Government will take forward a public consultation exercise)	
Negative revaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Service Pensions Revaluation (Prices) Order 2016 was laid before Parliament on 24th March 2016 confirming negative revaluation of -0.1%. - CWG to consider what communication is appropriate and the timing of that communication (once the position has been clarified by HMT and DCLG regarding deferred members). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - July 2016 (subject to the receipt of guidance from the Secretary of State)

Further information

If you have any queries regarding the information in this document please contact Lorraine Bennett – lorraine.bennett@local.gov.uk

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